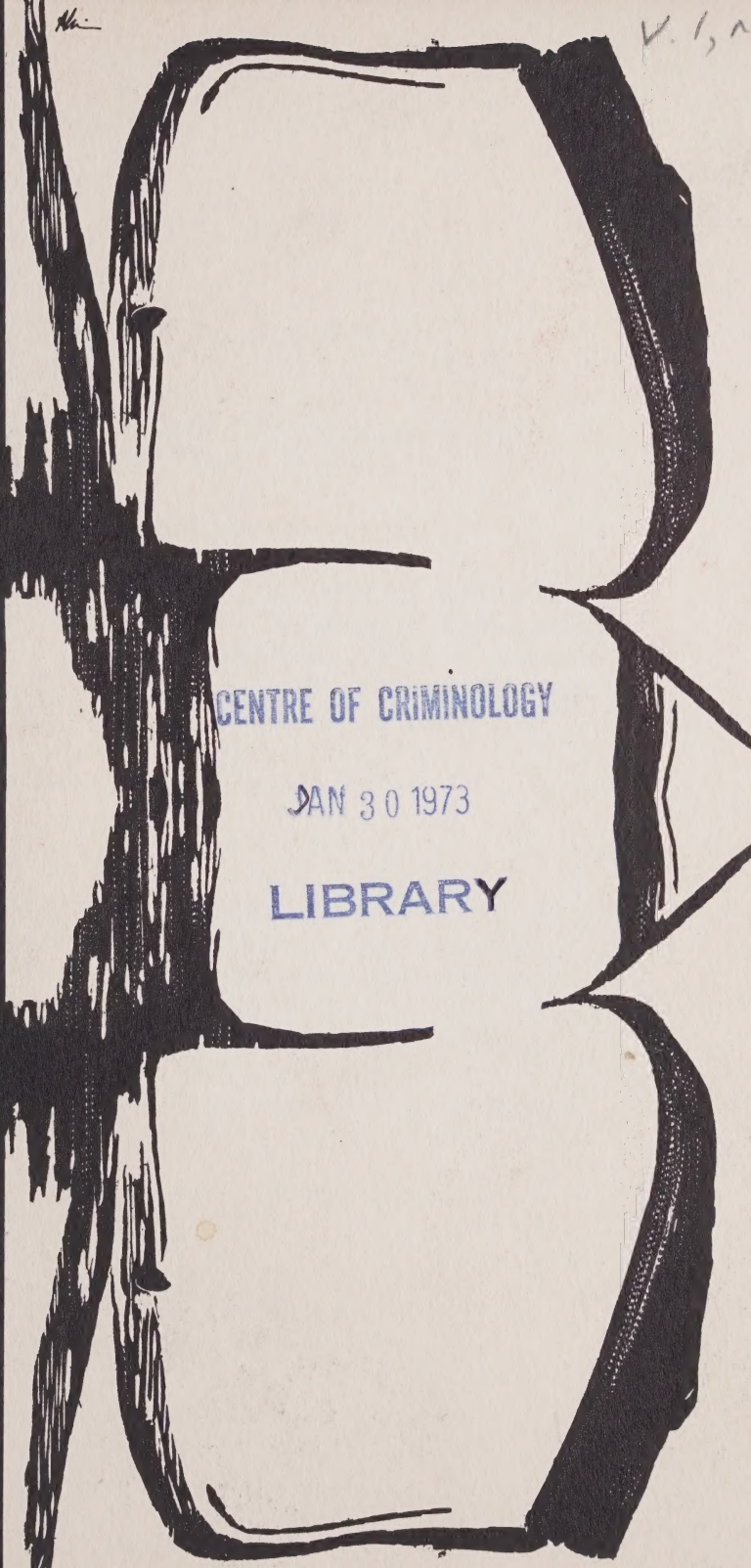


V. 1, No. 1, 1972



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## T R A N S I T I O N

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V1, No.1 December, 1972



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Transition is written and edited by inmates and ex-inmates of federal penitentiaries with ensured anonymity, if desired, and with complete editorial freedom.

Transition, for the inmates and ex-inmates, is our opportunity to have said and be read without prior censorship, without fear of retribution and without fear of such coercions as are inherent in the punishment-reward system of justice and corrections in this country. In Transition there is as much a demand to be heard as there is a call to be understood.

Because of space limitations some abbreviations have been used throughout:

SP - Saskatchewan Penitentiary, P.A.

CAC - Citizens' Advisory Committee

CCC - Community Correctional Center

NPS - National Parole Service

CPS - Canadian Penitentiary Service

TLA - Temporary Leave of Absence

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Free to Federal Penitentiary inmates.

We have had some help along the way to getting this premier issue put together. The Saskatchewan Corrections and Criminology Association provided funding.

We have had substantial cooperation from T J Ellis, Director and D S Dhillon, Supervisor of Education, at SP.

I would say a nice thing or two about Joe Sombach, who administers our funds, but some would say I was crumbing because he also happens to be my parole supervisor.

---ed.

The central theme of this issue is present community participation in the programs of the Saskatchewan Penitentiary. Necessarily we have gone deeply into the Academic programs, not only because it was through the Education Department that community participation began but because thusfar the programs introduced by this department have proven to be the most successful in terms of satisfying inmate needs.

We wish to provide our readers information, evaluation and opinion. In return we would like some feedback. What do you want to know?

# WE ONLY KISS THE ONES WE LOVE

When I was approached to write an article for Transition I agreed but with reservations.

I wondered what constructive purpose it might serve. I wondered --- would I reach you, would you know or understand me or other inmates better? I could bitch or snivel, I suppose, but this accomplishes nothing. Or if I merely praised the CPS or NPS, all or any part of the system, would you sit back self-centered, content, complacent or would you say, "That's cool, but much more is needed." If I knock the administration or system do you become irritated and turn off the current of communication I may be attempting to establish here? Basically, what my conjectures led me to ask is WHO and WHAT are you?

What is the Saskatchewan Corrections and Criminology Association? What do you do? You say you're interested in corrections. That's nice. When was the last time representatives of your group were up here to sit and talk with the Inmate Committee? When are you coming again? Are you ever coming up here again?

This may come as a shock to you but groups like yours are resented by many of



us in prison. This resentment arises from our general impression of you --- not just you, but just about every coven of concerned liberals who tinker with our lives. Your image? Try --- a bunch of fatcats sitting around in swank offices lightly bantering reform rhetoric. Unjust? Perhaps, but goddamn it, why don't you justify your existence as a group by coming up here and talking with us as men? Then, and only then, can we all screw reform rhetoric and get some serious practical reforming done. It's obvious that your organization is interested in corrections or there wouldn't be a SCCA (or, now that I think of it, a Transition) So, how about remembering that we also have a vested interest in corrections, that we also are men; men in prison who are in need of personal rapport with people like you.

We are your society's failures. We are the flaws in your system. But not without your help. How can it follow from this that we can change this state without your help. But what do you, in fact, say. You say, "Before we let you out you're gonna have to rehabilitate yourself." When Hippocrates said, "Physician, heal thyself", he at least had the good sense to provide the physician with the necessary tools.

Reform rhetoric whether it emanates from you or from us, doesn't

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have a hope in hell of curbing the crime rate or reducing the recidivist rate. Understanding may, planning may, action may. But you can't do it alone. Sure as hell we can't. Together, though, is something different. In the meantime people are having their lives smashed by this country's prison system. Men are being smashed; not statistics. As long as the prisons are as they now are, the only throats you cut are your own; and we don't need messes like that. Nobody does.

#### NOTE ON POLICY

The editorial policies of this publication do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Saskatchewan Corrections and Criminology Association. If there must be backlash from the reactionary elements within the corrections system it should be turned on the system proper, for there is the only area where it will have beneficial effect.



## UNIVERSITY RAP SESSIONS FIRST COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION TO SP

The rap sessions are a unique visitation program at SP which enable inmate and Saskatoon University students to sit and rap. Simple, sedate, successful.

This program was initiated in 1971. It was instantly a success, but like most programs which are not originated by the administration here or in Ottawa, a great deal of justification had to be gone through to continue and a great deal of obstructionism had to be overcome. Even when the idea was first propounded by John Klein, then of the University of Saskatchewan, there were difficulties.

The administration was primarily concerned that "romances" between inmates and female students might develop. After they were assured that all concerned would dislike each other --- the usual good citizen-criminal relationship, administration allowed the program to continue.

What are the rap sessions doing? They are establishing patterns of growth. Growth cannot occur without communication. The rap sessions specialize in communication. Growth and communication, not only for inmates but for the Saskatoon students as well.

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Are the rap sessions effective?

No statistics are available because it is impossible to measure anything as elusive as communication or growth. But they are affecting in the sense that the students exchange ideas, compare values, discuss such diverse things as their course work, community happenings and problems, politics, religion, morality ---both the publicly sanctioned and the privately blessed. The students offer each other new and different perspectives on life. A valuable exchange takes place; an exchange that is growth and communication.

ed.note: Penitentiary staff members who supervise these gatherings do so without pay. Thanks to anyone from a con is rare; thanks to staff from a con almost unheard of --- but these men have it.

THE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE:  
WHO NEEDS IT?

am

Each Tuesday the CAC meets at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary. It does not meet with individual inmates nor even with the Inmate Representative Committee. Its members are appointed by the prison director. They come from the community. They are good citizens. They have ID cards, complete with snapshot, which permit them to go anywhere in the prison. This is a nice status trip for them, I suppose. Sometimes I wonder who they advise, though it doesn't much matter.

We know they make public utterances. In the not-so-long-ago past, at a meeting of the Solicitor General's Task Force on Community-based Residential Treatment Centers, one of the CAC members, when speaking about inmates, law-breakers and riff-raff in general, said they (the corrections workers) must make them (the nasties) go to church, they must be taught to be Christians. He went on to say, "force the morals down their throats if need be!"

I must add, he was not speaking as an official rep of the CAC. Nor of any-



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thing else civilized that I can think of. He must have been speaking for himself.

Nice man. He could carry a bag of candy into any school-yard. Nice committee. It can carry ID cards into any penitentiary. Who needs it?

#### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: WHAT IT IS, WHERE IT'S AT

47% of the Saskatchewan Penitentiary inmate population do not receive visits from any source. The need for a visitation program has existed since the walls went up over fifty years ago.

Last year Harold Reid, member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee, was appointed to form and direct a program that would bring volunteer citizens into the prison to visit some of the convicts in this 47%

Growing from the first meetings last June, the Visitation Committee is now the co-ordinator of several groups visiting the pen on a regular basis. A subcommittee of inmates handles screening and organization among inmates. Added to this recently was a Saskatoon co-ordinator.

THE SASKATOON GROUP: Caught by Local  
Corrections Politics But Still  
Hanging In There

Wm. L. Bell

The Saskatoon group, put together by Doug Peterson, John Howard Society member and long-time professional youth worker, nearly didn't visit anyone. There were some misgivings up north and there were some hassles. But Doug, a man with a reputation here of common sense, ability and drive, got it together and even expanded it. In putting the thing together he worked harder than anyone and was always right up front.

Unfortunately, when the axe descends it's the man up front who gets it first. Reportedly because of his active involvement with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Association, Doug was asked to resign; and the penitentiary director, through the Citizens' Advisory Committee, arranged that Ray Dobney of the Friendship Inn replace him. Ray brings to the task a reputation of long experience working with derelicts and alcoholics.

The Visitation group is divided into two sections. The first, which visits on Thursday evenings is not so much designed to provide inmates of

visitors with the basis for a long-term relationship as it is designed to provide the inmate relaxation, information and an opportunity, however brief, to get out of the prison milieu for a few hours. The visitors find in these meetings an opportunity to learn, an opportunity to divest themselves of the con's public image and get into his reality a little bit --- something even many corrections workers are reluctant to do.

The second aspect of the program demands significant in-depth involvement by both volunteers and inmates, object being to develop strong one-to-one relationships for inmates who expect to be released to the Saskatoon area. Visitors in this group are not always also involved in the Thursday night sessions, which given the entirely different emphases is to be expected, if not desirable. The group's objective is that growing from the visits and correspondance between the volunteer and the inmate a viable community contact will eventually be provided the inmate upon release. In order that the volunteer will be of optimal benefit to the released inmate, they are taking an orientation course to familiarize themselves with community resources.

Both groups are now going strong



and, it appears, with a minimum of problems: Whether they will approach or meet their avowed objectives or founder in the apologetic liberal morasse remains to be seen.

#### WHAT IS A GOOD VOLUNTEER?

The original idea of a visitation group has merit, however, some problems are arising, which many fail to see as problems so happy they are to merely see the volunteer.

First, and most disappointing, aside from the Saskatoon group, the only outside members CAC Co-ordinator Harold Reid has been able to encourage to visit is the congregation from his church.

For a convict to communicate with a square-john is difficult in itself, but to communicate with a mission-driven religious square-john from Canada's bible belt is doubly hard. Most of these outside people are in the more-than-middle age bracket .... which certainly limits

communication (average age of inmates is under thirty).

As well, so many outside citizens who become involved in prison programs want only to be superficially involved. They hesitate to come in contact with the realities of the prison system. They seem to feel that just their presence in an institution will as if by magic promote some drastic changes in the life styles of the prisoners therein. This type of volunteer is nearly useless in that he will not stand up against the status quo; he will agree that changes are needed, but won't step out enough to affect a change.

A good volunteer is one whose hands are not tied directly or indirectly by the Administration of any prison. He must have free rein within an institution to enable him to learn and know --- and work hand in hand --- with the men or women in custody. And it is of utmost importance that he be able to accept or at least understand the criminals' ethics as opposed to society's laws.

Too many "volunteers" are of the impression that the system is good, and it is the prisoner who is bad. If a prisoner is to be changed the system must be changed proportionately. It does little good to engender hope in a

prisoner if within a moment the oppressive nature of the system is going to quash that hope. And it does little good to encourage a man with tales of society's goodness and rewards when he can see that the goodness is all in how you see the corruption and the rewards are all in how you exploit your hypocrisy. Instead of saying, "You are wrong," the volunteer must be able to say to the prisoner, "we, you and me and most of those around us are wrong. Together we will make amends, to ourselves and to each other."

With the right kind of volunteers from the community, the Visitation program at SP will prove to be a milestone in Canadian corrections. With solid and positive participation from cons ---and there is only one way to get that ---the program will not become another ineffectual paper prison program, of which there are too many already.

#### NEXT MONTH:

Vocational Programs in the Penitentiaries;  
Parole Possibility, Pre-release Coercion;  
Evaluation of Newstart Life Skills;  
Ethics of Behavior Modification.



# CONFORCE ONE: AN INMATE CORRECTIONS INITIATIVE

If inmates were given an opportunity to learn better work habits by working at trades other than painting cell bars or repairing mailboxes for the Government, etc., they might be better equipped to compete with workers when released into the free world society.

Most inmates discharged from the penitentiaries experience serious money problems during the shaky five or six months of readjustment immediately following release.

Inmates at SP, reflecting on these points several months ago, have been responsible for beginning Conforce One.

A tentative plan was proposed to SP Director T.J.Ellis and Supervisor of Industries J. O'Sullivan who gave their approval on a trial basis.

Essentially Conforce One is a pre-release work plan which allows a prisoner to leave the prison to work in a normal job situation in the outside community. This is primarily casual labour, often at jobs which local employers are hard-pressed to find workers for.

It is rather remarkable that there are a lot of unemployed and a lot on relief

yet employers cannot find common laborers. In Prince Albert and adjacent communities they now call on Conforce One and are able to immediately get needed workers at a going wage scale.

Admittedly this program is fairly young. It had to start slowly. It had to work out the problems which usually occur in any new project, yet it has established several things in its short life.

First, despite Eldon Woolliams and his ignorant mouth, over 50 inmates have been given over 700 TLA's for work release. They have worked over 5,500 manhours at all types of jobs. Every inmate has returned to the penitentiary after completing his work assignment.

Secondly, all of the employers are pleased at the efforts of these workers. Some have promised to give inmates employment after they have completed their sentences and in some cases have already done so.

Thirdly, this program has demonstrated that when concerned people take an active interest in helping an inmate in his attempt to rehabilitate himself, some definite progress can be made.

Conforce One is not the whole answer of course, but it is one of the factors that must be taken into consideration --- allowing an inmate to

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"earn" an opportunity to acquire good work habits and extra finances which will enable him to more easily and effectively re-enter the community.

This training must start prior to release in many cases. We here at SP hope that this type of program will be a model for similar programs in the future.

QUALIFIED PRAISE:  
THE MOST THE SYSTEM CAN HOPE FOR

The Saskatchewan Penitentiary has the most comprehensive educational program of any penitentiary in Canada.

If a man has the length of sentence, the courage and determination to persevere in the face of all the negative aspects of imprisonment, and the necessary intelligence, it is here possible for him to progress from an educational level of Grade One to First-year University Arts and Science.



The educational program as it existed in 1970 was Grades One to Ten. If further education was desired by an inmate he was more or less on his own. In the summer of 1971 the Supervisor of Education D.S.Dhillon, even in the face of local administrative pooh-poohing and indifference, obtained permission from Ottawa to negotiate with the University of Saskatchewan for an off-campus credit class to be conducted inside the walls. During the 1971-72 term, as a result of this, U. of S offered inmates a Sociology 101 course.

The Sociology class was a success. With that success as a base and through the concerted efforts of the Inmate Committee, D.S.Dhillon, D.J. Rooney and T.J. Ellis, the program was expanded to its present form. Now available are three U of S Credit classes, along with Grades 11 and 12 for those inmates who wish to upgrade their education to a level acceptable for university entrance. (NOTE: Presently there are approximately 75 inmates involved in these programs)

The administration has been quite progressive in its attitude toward education since the demonstrated success of the first class. They have established study areas in the school especially for those inmates taking these programs. They have also set aside a tier in the cell-blocks for these inmates. This tier

is relatively quiet and conducive to study --- if a prison atmosphere can be termed conducive to anything other than paranoia, anxiety, suspicion and hostility.

While commendable, the administration's education policies pose some questions that demand consideration. Questions such as: Will the present program continue? If so, will it be expanded? Will expansion be toward what might be termed a "Pen BA" or will TLA's be utilized to permit inmates access to on-campus programs? Will the CCC unit in Regina and that proposed for Saskatoon be used at least partially by students? Will the NPS condescend to sanity and permit expansion of this program through regular paroles?

I don't know what the powers that be have in store for this program. But I, and many others in here, pray to God that expansion will be progressive, intelligent, and soon.

## U OF S EXTENSION SUCCESS

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Dismayingly under-rated but immeasurably important have been the programs provided inmates by the Extension Division of U of S, Saskatoon Campus during the past two school years.

Seminars, workshops, T-groups ranging in length from one day to six weeks in subjects as diverse as small business management and fundamental computer programming, family and welfare law, group dynamics and civi government, Indian & Metis culture history and rights: all of these and open to any inmate who wishes to attend.

Despite fact these programs offer no credit as university classes or anything else except pure learning experience, every program is filled to capacity.

Probably this is the first time in Canadian penal institutions federal or provincial, when programs specifically geared to needs of natives have been presented.

Instrumental in formulating and co-ordinating these programs were two men.



whose names continually crop up when the 1971-73 period of community participation is discussed in terms of its successes, D.S. Dhillon and John Klein. And again, one must underscore fact that they had enough sense to more than rely on their own judgments, they went to the inmates to ascertain inmate needs and desires.

In their success there is an elemental lesson to be learned by all groups and individuals involved in programs with inmates, whether these be formal classroom affairs or informal rap sessions or anything in between: best be honest, best be open, and best be receptive. It isn't necessary that one buys everything he hears or reads --- inmates do not expect that --- but everything should be evaluated in terms other than bureaucratic needs or anachronistic puritanical moralism.

cometh the Night-tripper

CO-EDUCATION:

GRAND FUNK IN THE FARMLAND

Six or seven staff members are presently participating as students in the U of S credit classes in SP. This is another program first in Canada.

Why so few, one might ask, when the ratio of staff to inmates is nearly one to one? Certainly they're not all university grads already. Shift work makes it impossible for some. Class capacity is a factor for the program is basically for inmates. The necessity of an equalitarian relationship with inmates, if only for a few hours weekly, is beneath the dignity of some staff. Fear of coming out second best mark-wise may have chased off others. The majority probably have no interest in furthering their education they have the usual civil service security, sinecure, seniority, and filthy-fat salaries. One could surmise quite reasonably that the staff most in need of this type of education are the least likely to become involved. But then, to give a fascist a liberal education only makes him a liberal fascist.

Not so important are the uninvolved as the involved. In class? There truly is staff-inmate merging into student body. Digressions or foolish questions, as in any class, draw needling and insult from all sides. Outside class? Same old shit; no more, no less. Inmate-to-staff and staff-to-inmate relations and attitudes are unchanged. At this point, though early in the program yet, the co-ed effort has had no noticeable affect. The classroom is a DMZ. So much, then, for this little taste of the Therapeutic Community and Living Unit co-existence.

## ANOTHER FORM OF TRANSITION

Transitions' CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY AWARD this month goes to Provincial Judge Dean Saks of Edmonton, who in late November sentenced two 16-year olds, an 18-year old and a 19-year old to two years less a day, three years, and four years respectively, for the \$150 robbery of a gas station. None of the four had a previous criminal record.

Statistically and, we are sorry to say, possibly in reality, three of the four offenders are going to commit more crimes. In the punishing for one crime the perspicacious judge has directly caused countless more. For this we commend him.

In justifying the sentences Judge Saks said, "This kind of crime cannot be tolerated." That he can distinguish between tolerable and intolerable crimes makes him worthy to sit on the Alberta bench. That he commits only tolerable crimes makes him worthy of our award.





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